

Toronto Junction

Facts and Figures Showing Actual Conditions— Business Benefited—Drunkenness Decreased A Strong Statement by Rev. Dr. Hazlewood

Rev. Dr. Hazelwood, of Toronto Junction writes :

The statements that are made wherever a campaign is on were made most emphatically here. "It will kill business." "The grass will grow in the streets." "If you carry Local Option you will be able to fire a cannon down our Main street and hurt no one." Some believed this, and voted to keep the bar.

What are the conditions to-day in Toronto Junction?

The population has increased fifty per cent., and the assessment is seventy-five per cent. greater. The average wealth in 1903 was \$470 per head, and in 1905 it was \$542. The assessment for 1906 is not yet complete. Hotel property is assessed for more to-day than when a bar-room was a part of the outfit. This does not look as though Local Option destroyed the value of the hotel property.

For the first time in many years there has been no sale of land for taxes. Building operations in every line are going on very rapidly.

The deposits in the savings banks are much greater. We have two additional banks since the bar-room was banished. One banker said, "We have \$100,000 more in our savings department than we had three years ago.

Land values have increased. Lots that sold for \$40 a foot in bar-room days have since sold for \$80 per foot, and are now held for \$100, and rents for places and residences have advanced very greatly.

That is the business side. What about the morals of the town? I quote an extract from a statement signed by the Chief of Police: "The closing of the bar has had a wonderful effect on the young men of the town. It is a rare thing to see any of the young men of the town under the influence of liquor; in fact, drunkenness is seldom seen on the public streets compared with what it was under the license system. It has done away with the treating system that was such a common practice. I do not know of any dives or places of ill-repute where liquor is sold, nor any house of ill-fame. The hotels have just as good accommodation for the travelling public as under the license system."

The following are a few among many testimonies of business men. I shall omit names, but will be glad to furnish them on application :

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An ex-mayor, a merchant here for many years, who predicted dire results if the act was passed, says he is free to admit that he was mistaken, that Local Option has been a great benefit to the town, and the man who votes to bring back the bar-rooms takes a fearful responsibility.

One of the ablest opponents of the measure says : " The police statistics speak eloquently and powerfully in favor of Local Option. The treating habit has been killed." He will vote to keep the bar-room out.

A dry goods man says : " Notwithstanding increased competition, my business is much better to-day. Families that had little to spend in the days of the bar-room, are spending more now, and are buying a better class of goods. Some who asked for credit, and were slow to pay, pay cash now."

A shoe-dealer put it this way : " My business the last three months of license, compared with the corresponding three months of the year previous, showed only a slight increase. The first month after the bars were closed, there was a very decided increase over the same month of the preceding year, and the first six months under Local Option, when compared with the same six months of the last year of license, shows an increase in sales of fifty per cent. My business now is double what it was when the bars were closed."

Such a development cannot be explained by the general progress of the country. It most certainly indicates that the money that was formerly spent at the bar is now being spent upon the necessities of life.

A prominent manufacturer said : " Local Option is a great blessing to Toronto Junction and to us. Formerly many of our men simply could not pass the bars on their way to and from work, and we had much trouble. We built a stone wall between us and one of the hotels, but with very little beneficial result. That is all a thing of the past, and our men are better in every way."

A business man who had voted against Local Option, one month after it came into operation, said to a neighbor : " It is a good thing for me that it carried. I have saved already two dollars in treats that I would have had to put up for the boys. Surely these facts and testimonies ought to count for something with business men in other places. If Toronto Junction is dead, then I know many towns that would like to be dead in the same way.

It is said that liquor is brought in in large quantities from outside, and that there is as much consumed as before. That is simply false. Some liquor is brought in, but the quantity is very small. The desire that must be satisfied in this way is the product of the license system. Local Option does away with the very instrument that creates this condition, and makes it possible for our boys to grow up without the open bar, to whose temptation their fathers yielded and fell. To quote again the Chief of Police : " We are no longer manufacturing drunkards in Toronto Junction."—*Christian Guardian*.